

# THE MASTER KEY

By John Fleming Wilson

By special arrangement for this paper a photo-drama corresponding to the installments of "The Master Key" may now be seen at the leading moving picture theaters. By arrangement made with the Universal Film Manufacturing company it is not only possible to read "The Master Key" in this paper, but also afterward to see moving pictures of our story.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### The Escape of Ruth.

THEIR escape from the hands of the outraged priests of Bhalu, Sir Donald Faversham prepared to start the new day. He could not well realize just what had happened in the twenty-four hours that had just ended. It needed the commonplace details of a morning's toilet to make things seem actual. And what facts they were that changed his whole future! Ruth had promised to marry him! Faversham belonged to that great class of Englishmen who unite the virtues of careful training with an adaptability to circumstance which has made Great Britain the colonizer of the world. He was as formal in many ways as a clock. In others he could amaze the most impulsive and impressionable adventurer. When he first met Ruth he had had not the faintest notion of wooing her. His admiration had been frank and unreserved, but without any underlying depth of feeling. His volunteering to join John Dorr and Ruth in this wild search for the missing idol had been what he called a lark. It was only long association with her, the constant view of her pretty innocence and an occasional glimpse of her profounder and womanly nature that had led him to the point where he had found himself confessing to himself. Then came the moment when she had turned to him for help and he had been the single person in the world who could save John Dorr. Sharp and brief as had been the struggle in his own mind, it had brought him to an acknowledgment of the fact that she was the only woman he wanted for his wife. On the very tick of her hour of trouble he had ventured to ask his reward for service. She had promised, and now he, knight and retired officer of the British army, shook like a boy at the thought of the happiness that awaited him. They met at breakfast, Dorr still admiring the effects of his night's adventures, Ruth bright-eyed from want of sleep and Sir Donald alone presenting the appearance of one who had begun the day bright after a sound night's rest. Their natural topic of conversation was of Dorr's attempt to capture the idol and Sir Donald's rescue of him. John could give little satisfaction to Ruth's minute inquiries, and the Englishman confessed that he himself, though much more familiar with the native ways and native temples, had not much notion of exactly how it had all come about nor how he had found Dorr and extricated him. "The only thing I gather from it all is this," he said amiably. "You had better take my advice in this country and not try to perform any of your western feats. India is a very old country, and their resent here anything that doesn't follow the good old lines." "I suppose I was very foolish," John confessed ruefully. "But when I saw that image right within reach I simply couldn't resist the temptation to grab it and try to escape." Sir Donald looked at Ruth meaningfully. "I can't say that I'm a bit sorry, old chap," he told Dorr. "After all, as you say, it's an ill wind that blows no one any good." Instantly Ruth caught his meaning, and her eyes flew. Yes, she had promised, and this brave gentleman who had risked his life for her sake should not be without his reward. But she stared miserably at her plate until John rallied her and swore that he would get the plans. "And here comes the fellow who will tell us what really did happen," Sir

Donald remarked, pointing to a much bedraggled native who had entered the compound and was evidently waiting for some one. "That's my old servant," he continued. "If you will excuse me I'll go and hear what he has to tell us." Ruth and John watched the two of them for some time, the tall, carefully



She impulsively turned to John.

by. "The truth of the matter is, we are known to be stopping here and the mob will undoubtedly visit us shortly." "But the police?" "Sir Donald looked very uncomfortable indeed. "My dear fellow, don't you realize that what you and I did last night was purely and simply indefensible? We tried to rob a temple, to be frank about it." "I tried to recover some papers belonging to us," he protested. "We would have a stiff time trying to prove that to the officials here. I can't afford to bring this up. I'm still practically an officer and I should have a decent of a time clearing myself. You can't afford to call in the police because you're an American, and you broke British law, and I very much fear killed a British subject or two." "I see," Dorr assented thoughtfully. "But what are we to do?" "Precisely, precisely the question," said Sir Donald. "You and I could slip away, but there is the young lady to consider."

"And the plans," said John doggedly. Sir Donald flushed angrily. "I am considering the young lady in this matter." "And I, as her guardian, have to think of her best interests," was the retort. Faversham tugged at his mustache in perplexity. Then he said quietly, "I think Miss Galloway has really put her interests in my charge." "What—what do you mean?" stammered Dorr. At this moment there came from the street outside the sound of cries and yells and tramping feet. The two men looked at each other. With one accord they withdrew inside the hall way.

"That's the mob coming!" Sir Donald said hoarsely. "Now for it!" "We must save Ruth at all events!" "Certainly," said Faversham coldly. "But I must plan quickly. Ah, here comes my faithful Achmet!" The servant spoke rapidly in the vernacular, and Sir Donald answered in the same tongue. Then he turned to John.

"Bring Miss Galloway here quickly," he commanded. "Don't alarm her needlessly." Ruth responded to the summons without a tremor, and when a few hurried words had informed her of what was afoot she turned to the Englishman and said simply, "What shall we do?"

"I am going to put you in charge of my old servant Achmet," he told her. "I trust him, and he will see you safe. Dorr and I shall have to go a separate way."

By this time the mob had filled the street without and was yelling for vengeance on the sacrilegious white men, punctuating its demands with an occasional stone against the wall.

Achmet bowed low before Ruth and with a gesture indicated that she was to follow him. She hesitated.

Sir Donald curtly said, "Hurry!" She impulsively turned to John, and he saw her eyes filled with anxiety for him. That satisfied his wounded heart, and he urged her on.

When she had disappeared in the wake of the hasting servant Sir Donald glanced at Dorr and then said abruptly: "Come ahead! We'll try a back way out."

"We shan't interfere with Ruth's getting away, shall we?" John responded.

There was a glimmer of admiration in Faversham's eyes as he shook his head. "No. Achmet will take her his own way. We go an entirely different one—if we escape the mob."

He had hardly spoken when the outer gate swung inward and there was a wild crush of struggling bodies between the high pillars. A stone struck the floor between the two Europeans.

"Come with me," said Faversham and drew Dorr around a corner and then inside a small entry. Another entry giving off this offered escape and they darted down it. An instant later they were in an empty courtyard.

"I know where I am now," Faversham said coolly and opened a gate in the opposite wall which led into a garden. Five minutes later the two men were strolling along a quiet lane out of sight and sound of the mob.

"They will destroy all our things," Dorr suggested.

"No. The hotelkeeper and the police will see to it that they don't. All they wanted was you and me. Failing to catch us, they will disperse."

"But where shall we find Ruth?" John went on eagerly.

"Achmet will take her to a camp of beggars outside the city," he answered.

"But how? She won't be safe with only a native."

"Safer than with a regiment of soldiers," was the response. "I know where the place is. Let's go to it. I guarantee that we shall find Miss Galloway safe and sound. I know Achmet of old. He is a specially trustworthy because he is a Mohammedan and he doesn't respect idols any more than you and I do."

"They finally reached the camp up the bank of the river and Achmet assumed before them.

"Where is the maiden?" demanded Faversham.

The servant rose and took the covering off a large basket. Ruth smiled up at them.

"I heard your voices," she said, laughing. "Achmet thought I ought to get out right away, but I wanted to surprise you."

"And that is the way you got out of the hotel?" demanded John.

"Yes, Achmet tucked me into this basket and carried me right through all those terrible people."

"What is to be done now?" John demanded presently.

"I'll have Achmet get our belongings," said Faversham. "This gang here is his, he says. We can't do better than stick with them for awhile. I believe they are going up into the hills anyway. So much the better for us. Bhalu is no spot for you and me just now."

"But the idol and the plans?" protested John. "We know where it is today. Tomorrow it may be a hundred miles away or hidden past our ever finding it."

"That is true," said Sir Donald. "But the safety of Miss Galloway is paramount. I will do what I can. Possibly I'll be able to do more than you think."

With this Dorr had to be content, but later when he and Ruth were alone he brought the subject up again.

To his amazement, Ruth seemed little interested and her manner was an odd mixture of reserve and timidity.

"Gone was the old frankness and intimacy."

At last John said quietly, "I hope you don't think I was wholly careless of your safety last night. My only object was to get back your papers."

And Ruth, with Sir Donald's flushed face before her eyes and his voice in her ears, remembered her promise and was silent.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### Wilkinson Again on the Trail.

IT had not been difficult for Harry Wilkinson and Mrs. Darnell to trace Faversham and his party from the time they landed to their arrival in Bhalu. But the idol itself, the object of their quest, still concealed its whereabouts in spite of the most minute inquiries.

"We'll simply have to watch Dorr," Wilkinson said at last. "We know he is on the trail, and we'll just follow him. Sooner or later we'll catch him."

Jean Darnell sullenly agreed, but privately confided to Drake that she thought Wilkinson had lost his nerve.

The climate did not suit her, nor the food, nor the primitive modes of travel and her temper grew worse and worse. Drake promised to do some investigating on his own hook. He was once more completely under the woman's domination, and he dreamed of finding the precious papers himself and so putting Wilkinson out of the running.

Strangely enough, the man, weakly vicious as he was, was possessed by an honest and whole souled love for Jean.

She knew this, and at times her tawny eyes rested on him with remarkable affection, but she knew perfectly well that she would choose Wilkinson provided he made good by gaining the master key and uncovering the wealth of the great mother land.

It was Drake who brought the news of the riot in the temple and the outcome of Dorr's attempt to steal the idol.

"He was disguised and thought he could get away with it," he went on. "But the priests were too quick for him."

Wilkinson's shifty eyes narrowed. "I'll get that idol!" he boasted.

"I forgot to tell you that the idol isn't there any longer," Drake continued. "From what I could learn the temple wasn't considered a safe place for it, and it's disappeared."

"Where to?" demanded Wilkinson.

"That I couldn't find out. It was rather risky asking too much anyway."

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IT had an hour's steady tramping brought them within gunshot of the place, and Wilkinson went ahead to spy out the lay of things.

When he came back he roughly told Drake, in reply to his question, that the idol must be in one of the back sacks lying about.

"It's a case of sneak up and get a sack each of us and then look for the idol in it," he said.

"All right," Drake growled. "But it's risky business. In case of a muss where'll we meet again?"

"At our own camp," Wilkinson whispered and led the way.

When they came close to the spot where the natives were asleep the three of them paused and listened.

Presently Wilkinson gave a silent signal that no one was awake, and they crept up among the baggage.

The first two sacks yielded nothing and Wilkinson was reaching out for one that seemed bulging than the rest when their guide coughed and instantly a couple of the priests awakened.

Seeing strangers, they gave an alarm, and one, apparently a soldier, fired off an ancient musket as close to Drake that he ineffectually dropped his burden and fled.

He heard Wilkinson cursing behind him, a couple of more shots and then took to his heels in good earnest as he heard rapid footsteps.

A moment later Wilkinson had caught up to him, panting and dragging the sack, which he had refused to surrender.

Between them they carried it on further and then rested in a slight hollow till their guide came up.

"If the idol isn't in this sack," Wilkinson said with a snarl, "I'll go back and shoot up the whole outfit and get it."

When the things were cut and the great bag opened the first object that met their eyes was the image they sought, glimmering in the half light.

The moment he saw it and knew that his quest was ended Wilkinson flung the rest of the stuff away and boldly got to his feet.

"Now for our own camp. We'll just see where those plans are," he growled.

Drake and the guide both protested in vain.

Safely away from pursuit, they lit a light and examined their find.

"It's the same one," Wilkinson said triumphantly.

"Made of metal, too," said Drake slowly. "Now, where are the plans?"

"Inside of it!" announced his companion, beating on the idol with his knuckles. "Now to find out the opening."

It did not take long for him to discover the movable eye, and when he had pulled that out he thrust his finger in and withdrew it with a folded paper.

"Safe and sound," he exclaimed, dropping the image to the ground, where

red her in her dreams.

She shuddered and reached out one slender hand. It touched that of John Dorr and rested there as if she had found safety.

Sir Donald saw that movement, and his eyes burned with jealousy. But he did not move, keeping his ears open for the faintest shadow between his charges and the horizon.

(Continued Next Wednesday.)

LEGAL NOTICES.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior.

United States Land Office at Santa Fe, N. M., February 25, 1915.

Notice is hereby given that Joseph W. Van Cleave, of Albuquerque, N. M., who, on January 12, 1909, made

homestead entry No. 82261, for SW 1/4, Section 29, Township 18N., Range 10E., N. M. P. Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make five year proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before George H. Craig, United States commissioner, at Albuquerque, N. M., on the 23rd day of March, 1915.

Claimant names as witnesses: Louis A. Tessier, Emil Mann, Allen C. Bone, Martha E. Hart, all of Albuquerque, N. M. FRANCISCO DELAIDO, Register.

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"Evening Herald," Albuquerque, N. M.

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COLDS

An up-to-date remedy for colds. That is what Peruna is. In successful use over 50 years.

Colds are caught in many ways: illy ventilated rooms; rooms that have direct draughts; crowded rooms; damp houses; stuffy school rooms; offices illy heated.

A dose of Peruna at the right time, at the first symptom of cold, before the bones begin to ache, before the sore throat manifests itself, or the cough, or the discharge from the nose, just a dose or two of Peruna before these symptoms begin is generally sufficient. But after the cold is once established with the above symptoms prominent, a bottle of Peruna, or maybe two, will be necessary.

"For several years I have been troubled with colds at each change of season. I took Peruna and have not been troubled with the slightest cold this entire season." Mr. Harry Fisher, 1913 Mosher St., Baltimore, Md.

"I give the children Peruna if they have a cold, and it always relieves them." Mrs. J. D. Hayes, 1927 Druid Hill Ave., Baltimore, Md.

"When I feel a cold coming on I take a little Peruna, and it does me good." Mr. Charles R. Many, 12 Water St., Ossining, N. Y.

"No family should ever be without Peruna for it is an infallible cure for colds." Mrs. M. F. Jones, Durango Springs, Ky.



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